

Appl. No. 10/709,446
Amdt. dated March 16, 2006
Reply to Office action of January 23, 2006

REMARKS

Present Status of Application

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of this application.

- 5 The Office Action rejected claims 1-8 and 20-28, and objected to claims 9-19 and 29-39. Specifically, claims 1-7 and 20-27 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being unpatentable over Tanaka (US Patent Number 4,799,122). Claims 8 and 28 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka, in view of Akiba (US Patent Number 5,883,870). In addition, claims 9-19 and 29-39 were objected to as being
- 10 dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have canceled claims 1-8 and 20-28 without prejudice and amended claim 9 and claim 29 according to Examiner's suggestions. Claims 40 and 41 are introduced according to original claims 5 and 25 respectively.

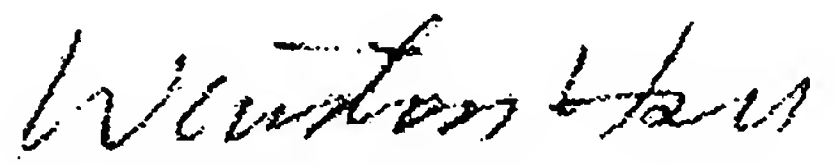
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Conclusion

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the amended claims and request for reconsideration of all pending claims that are in condition for allowance.

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Sincerely yours,



Date: 03/16/2006

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